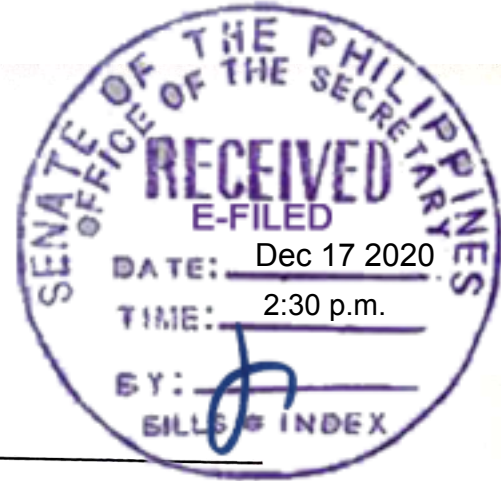


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session

SENATE

P.S. Res. No. **599**



**INTRODUCED BY SENATORS RISA HONTIVEROS, RALPH G. RECTO,
FRANKLIN M. DRILON, FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN, MARIA LOURDES NANCY
BINAY, LEILA M. DE LIMA, AND RICHARD J. GORDON**

**A RESOLUTION URGING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN
INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE SPATE OF UNLAWFUL
KILLINGS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ATTAINING JUSTICE FOR THE SLAIN
VICTIMS AND CREATING POLICIES THAT WILL HELP RESTORE THE LAW AND
ORDER INTO THE COUNTRY**

WHEREAS, on 7 July 2020, lawyer Jovencio Senados was killed on his way to work as Manila City Prosecutor's Office's Division Chief. He was 62 years old at the time of his death from multiple bullet wounds fired in broad daylight and in public¹;

WHEREAS, on 10 August 2020, Randall Echanis and his neighbor, Louie Tagapia, were killed in Quezon City. Echanis, who was a part of the peace negotiations, was 72 years old when he was gruesomely tortured before being killed and whose assailants are still not identified as of this moment²;

WHEREAS, on 17 August 2020, former Education Director of Human Rights Alliance KARAPATAN Zara Alvarez was shot 6 times by unknown assailants who sped away from the crime scene with their motorcycle-riding accomplice. She was the 13th member of KARAPATAN who has been killed since mid-2016 and was known for her longtime work in championing farmers' rights in Negros³;

WHEREAS, on 10 October 2020, an attempt on the life of lawyer James Gupana was made; he was ambushed and fired at by 2 motorcycle-riding assailants near his residence in Lapu-Lapu City. Their attempt at murder ultimately failed and Atty. Gupana was able to survive the encounter alive⁴;

WHEREAS, a month after on 10 November 2020, DPWR radio commentator Virgilio Maganes was not as lucky as Atty. Gupana when he was shot at by motorcycle-riding gunmen in Pangasinan: he died instantly from the bullet shots. Maganes was a survivor of a prior attempt on his life and was a victim of the "I am a drug-pusher, don't emulate me" modus operandi. He was the 18th journalist murdered since 2016⁵;

¹ <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1303449/top-manila-inquest-prosecutor-shot-dead>

² <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1325214/forensic-pathologist-echanis-met-torturous-death>

³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/19/human-rights-leader-killed-in-philippine-war-against-dissent>

⁴ <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1346082/lawyer-wounded-in-lapu-lapu-city-ambush>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/10/journalist-virgilio-maganes-shooting-killed-philippines>

WHEREAS, 4 days after Maganes' death, another journalist was murdered on 14 November 2020 by Philippine Army soldiers outside a military checkpoint in Milagros, Masbate. Journalist Ronnie Villamor allegedly drew a firearm when he was ordered to stop his motorcycle at an army checkpoint which prompted Army members to shoot him⁶. This version of the incident was strongly denied by the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines. Incidentally, he was claimed as a member of the New People's Army by the army and police, as reported by Bulatlat⁷;

WHEREAS, on 17 November 2020, lawyer Eric Jay Magcamit was shot to death in Palawan by 2 unidentified suspects. His vehicle was gunned down and the suspects took their chance when Atty. Magcamit alighted from his vehicle and fired at him twice. The young lawyer is now one of the many lawyers killed in 2020 alone⁸;

WHEREAS, less than a week after Atty. Magcamit's death, Atty. Joey Luis Wee was gunned down near his office in Cebu City on 23 November 2020. He was the second lawyer in Cebu to be ambushed in less than 2 months⁹;

WHEREAS, on 25 November 2020, the elderly couple and former NDFP consultants Agaton Topacio and Eugenia Magpantay were killed by policemen during a raid conducted in 3 in the morning. The elderly couple allegedly resisted arrest after police authorities issued their warrant at which point the policemen could have used their training to peacefully subdue the couple without using violence or firearms¹⁰;

WHEREAS, on 3 December 2020, Los Banos Mayor Caesar Perez was killed inside the municipal hall after being shot twice to the head by unidentified suspects. He was previously accused of being involved in the illegal drug trade and was subsequently stripped over his powers over the local police force; he strongly denied his links to the illegal drug trade¹¹;

WHEREAS, on 11 December 2020; Dr. Chao-Tiao Yumol had been the subject of a gun attack in Zamboanga City by 2 motorcycle-riding gunmen. Fortunately, Dr. Yumol's life was saved by an improvised bullet proof vest¹²;

WHEREAS, just this 16 of December 2020, Dr. Mary Rose Sancelan and her husband Edwin Sancelan were killed by 2 motorcycle-riding assailants who are still unidentified¹³. Dr. Sancelan was tagged as a member of NPA-Central Negros by KAGUBAK, an anti-communist vigilante group in Negros Oriental. Her death dealt a severe blow to the local IATF, for she was the head of IATF Guihulngan City before her untimely death¹⁴;

WHEREAS, the killings that occurred in the latter half of the year has set a disturbing trend of unidentified gunmen killing lawyers, doctors, journalists, and activists in daylight and in public without fear of arrest or apprehension. Their increasing brazenness and daring show how the law enforcement authorities have lost control of the country's peace and order and in doing so cost more families to lose their loved ones to lawless violence and unnecessary grief;

⁶ <https://cpj.org/2020/11/philippine-soldiers-shoot-and-kill-journalist-ronnie-villamor-at-checkpoint/>

⁷ <https://www.bulatlat.com/2020/11/18/philippine-army-soldiers-kill-journalist-in-masbate/>

⁸ <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/11/17/2057539/palawan-lawyer-killed-his-way-hearing>

⁹ <https://www.cnn.ph/regional/2020/11/24/Lawyer-Joey-Luis-Wee-Cebu-ambush.html>

¹⁰ <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/08/20/brutal-murder-of-elderly-peace-consultants-condemned>

¹¹ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/los-banos-laguna-mayor-shot-december-3-2020>

¹² <https://www.philstar.com/happens/657>

¹³ <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/12/16/2064199/negros-doctor-said-be-vigilante-hit-list-killed-alongside-husband>

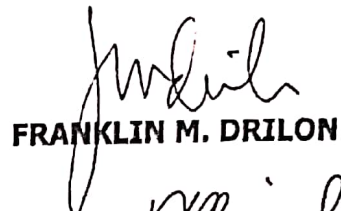
¹⁴ <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/768179/doctor-husband-shot-dead-in-negros-oriental-police/story/>

WHEREAS, the country's law enforcement must work tirelessly, endlessly, properly, and lawfully to catching these assailants and to prevent more unlawful and vigilante killings from happening in order to prove to the Filipino public that law and order is still a reality that they are working towards;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to urge the proper Senate Committees to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation on the spate of unlawful killings, with the end in view of attaining justice for the slain victims and creating policies that will help restore the law and order into the country.

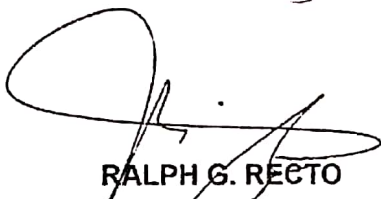
Adopted,


RISA HONTIVEROS


FRANKLIN M. DRILON


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RALPH G. RECTO


LILIA M. DE LIMA


RICHARD J. GORDON